

**To:** Korleski, Christopher[korleski.christopher@epa.gov]; Poy, Thomas[poy.thomas@epa.gov]; Henry, Timothy[henry.timothy@epa.gov]; Bair, Rita[bair.rita@epa.gov]; Deltoral, Miguel[deltoral.miguel@epa.gov]  
**Cc:** Rowan, Anne[rowan.anne@epa.gov]  
**From:** Bassler, Rachel  
**Sent:** Wed 4/5/2017 4:52:30 PM  
**Subject:** FW: Media questions -- East Chicago water

All,

Please see the follow up questions below. The reporter's deadline is 5pm tomorrow.

Thanks,

Rachel

Rachel Bassler

Press Officer

U.S. EPA Region 5

[bassler.rachel@epa.gov](mailto:bassler.rachel@epa.gov)

p: 312-886-7159

c: 312-914-3393

**From:** Sarah Reese [mailto:Sarah.Reese@nwi.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 05, 2017 11:49 AM  
**To:** Bassler, Rachel <Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Media questions -- East Chicago water

Hi Rachel,

I have one follow up question. It's regarding EPA's answer to question 2 below.

The answer was: **There are many blended phosphate products which vary in the percentages and types of orthophosphate and polyphosphate. The types and percentages in each blended phosphate product are propriety information and EPA has insufficient information on blended phosphates to assess the relative effectiveness of any given blended phosphate with using only orthophosphate.**

EPA told me in a previous statement (sent to me Feb. 3 by Anne Rowan): **In August 2016, IDEM told EPA that the specific corrosion control chemical used by East Chicago is called "Carus 8600." "Carus 8600" is a blend that includes 30% polyphosphate (as hexametaphosphate) and 70% orthophosphate. The orthophosphate portion of the chemical blend is what helps with lead corrosion control.**

I'm looking for some clarification, since it appears these two statements may conflict.

Question: If EPA knows Carus 8600 is a blend that includes 30% polyphosphate (as hexametaphosphate) and 70% orthophosphate, is that not sufficient information to assess the relative effectiveness of Carus 8600?

My original question was: Virginia Tech professor Marc Edwards said, "While the new chemical 8600 is better than sodium hexametaphosphate, I think they could do better with just orthophosphate." Does EPA have a response to that statement?

My deadline is 5 p.m. Thursday.

Thanks,

Sarah

**From:** Bassler, Rachel [<mailto:Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 29, 2017 5:44 PM  
**To:** Sarah Reese  
**Subject:** RE: Media questions -- East Chicago water

Hi Sarah,

Here are our responses, to be attributed to U.S. EPA or an EPA spokesperson.

**Q 1: Did IDEM ask East Chicago to use the ortho-polyphosphate blend Carus 8600 at the urging of EPA?**

A: Carus 8600 is a proprietary blend of: 1) orthophosphate -- to control corrosion from lead and copper – 2) and polyphosphate to address discoloration issues related to the iron (red) and manganese (black) in the water. Please note that polyphosphates alone are not effective for controlling lead and copper levels. Orthophosphates alone do provide effective corrosion control for lead and copper. It was the city's decision to use this blend.

**Q 2: Virginia Tech professor Marc Edwards said, “While the new chemical 8600 is better than sodium hexametaphosphate, I think they could do better with just orthophosphate.” Does EPA have a response to that statement?**

A: There are many blended phosphate products which vary in the percentages and types of orthophosphate and polyphosphate. The types and percentages in each blended phosphate product are propriety information and EPA has insufficient information on blended phosphates to assess the relative effectiveness of any given blended phosphate with using only orthophosphate.

**Q 3. Internal EPA emails in August 2016 also showed employees were aware of a 2005 American Water Works Association report titled “Managing Change and Unintended Consequences: Lead and Copper Rule Corrosion Control Treatment.” The report discusses several factors that may have been at play in East Chicago, including the change to membrane filtration, blending finished waters and changing corrosion control chemicals. What steps, if any, did EPA take to investigate whether any of the factors mentioned above might be affecting quality, including lead levels, in East Chicago’s water?**

A: EPA stands ready to provide technical assistance to agencies like IDEM which have the primary authority to manage the state drinking water program and/or to public water systems whenever and wherever problems or concerns arise. IDEM and the city of East Chicago are running an effective drinking water program that has been--and remains--in full compliance with EPA’s Lead and Copper and Rule.

**Q 4. An email from IDEM’s Mary Hollingsworth to EPA’s Thomas Poy on Jan. 5, 2017, took issue with “misinformation” in a letter EPA’s Robert Kaplan wrote to Sen. Donnelly (I believe this to be a letter written to Rep. Pete Visclosky based on content of the letter described by Hollingsworth). The first point Hollingsworth discusses is the 15 ppb action level. The letter explains the sampling required under the Lead and Copper Rule, and Hollingsworth goes on to say results above the action level in EPA’s sequential sampling do not indicate an issue with East Chicago’s compliance or IDEM’s implementation and oversight, but might indicate an issue with the Lead and Copper Rule. Residents, environmental groups and experts agree that “any results over 15 ppb would be a major cause for concern.” Does EPA agree with that statement?**

A: There is no safe level of lead exposure. The Lead and Copper Rule sets the “action level” for lead at 15 ppb based on first-draw samples. This action level was based in part on the effectiveness of available treatment, taking cost into consideration. The City of East Chicago has never exceeded 15 ppb action level based on first-draw samples -- EPA’s required compliance sampling protocol for lead.

**Q 5: Does EPA have any updates on its previously stated intention to update the Lead and Copper Rule?**

A: EPA currently plans to propose revisions to the Lead and Copper Rule in 2017.

**Q 6: Hollingsworth’s Jan. 5 email says low orthophosphate levels found in the Superfund**

**site are the result of low water flows because of dead-end lines near railroad tracks. It appears IDEM is taking a position that the low orthophosphate levels found in the Superfund site are a localized issue, not a system-wide issue as EPA has previously stated. Does EPA have any response to that?**

A: East Chicago's August and September 2016 monthly operating reports show orthophosphate levels ranging from 0.03 ppm to 0.5 ppm throughout the drinking water system. The city and IDEM continue to evaluate the orthophosphate levels found at homes on the Superfund site.

**Q 7. IDEM has stated the mass relocation of people from the West Calumet Housing Complex also could results in lower orthophosphate residuals in the Superfund site. What steps, if any, has EPA taken to protect residents in the Superfund site from this possible exposure?**

A. Reduced water usage in one area can affect how long it takes for orthophosphate to reach those areas. EPA is confident that IDEM's recently announced plan to provide water filters to all homes in Zones 2 and 3 ensures that residents have safe drinking water.

**Q 8. Hollingsworth's Jan. 5, 2017, email also says "IDEM has always felt that working closely with EPA on drinking water issues is extremely important and we will continue to work with EPA, but because of this situation and the way it was handled and is still being handled, our close working relationship had been compromised." Has EPA responded to this email?**

A. EPA disagrees with Ms. Hollingsworth's statement. EPA has a strong relationship with IDEM continues to work in close collaboration to address all the issues associated with the USS Lead cleanup, including the Agency's drinking water pilot study. EPA has offered strong support for IDEM's effective drinking water program in public forums, noting that that the city and state have fully complied with the Lead and Copper Rule.

**Q: Isn't it important for residents to know -- regardless of whether the city is in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule -- that they have elevated lead levels in their drinking water?**

A: Yes, it is always important to keep residents informed on any potential risks from drinking water. This why EPA telephoned and mailed residents their results, provided results and advice on our website, held an open house (with an extensive presentation by Miguel Del Toral), and took other steps to inform residents.

**Q. It appears EPA, IDEM and the city had been working on draft FAQs to hand out at an open house regarding lead in drinking water when Mayor Anthony Copeland suddenly upended that process by announcing water sampling results in an open letter. Were the parties initially planning to announce water testing results at a Dec 10 open house?**

A: During the week of December 5, EPA began providing individual water results to residents whose homes were tested. EPA planned to discuss the water pilot project and the available results at the December 10 meeting with the community at large. EPA also provided additional, verified water results to individual residents as they became available throughout December and January. Those additional results were discussed in detail at the Jan. 27, 2017, community open house which you attended.

**Q. Emails from Miguel Del Toral and Andrea Porter on Oct. 25, 2016, say, the operator confirmed "the numbers on the MOR are orthophosphate." IDEM's Mary Hollingsworth provided an update in October that said the city was "increasing orthophosphate feed to 1 ppm leaving the plant. Their target residuals in the distribution system is now 0.75 to 1 ppm." Can EPA clarify what this means? Are the numbers on the city's MORs total phosphate (total P) or orthophosphate (PO4)? Was East Chicago measuring the total amount of orthophosphate it was feeding?**

A: IDEM confirmed that the values measured at the treatment plant are orthophosphate. The orthophosphate "leaving the plant" is the amount added at the treatment plant. The "target residuals in the distribution system" refers to the desired concentration in the water lines.

Rachel Bassler

Press Officer

U.S. EPA Region 5

[bassler.rachel@epa.gov](mailto:bassler.rachel@epa.gov)

p: 312-886-7159

c: 312-914-3393

-----Original Message-----

From: Bassler, Rachel  
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 2:33 PM  
To: 'Sarah Reese' <[Sarah.Reese@nwi.com](mailto:Sarah.Reese@nwi.com)>  
Subject: RE: Media questions -- East Chicago water

Hi Sarah,

I received your questions and we are working to meet your deadline.

Thanks,

Rachel

Rachel Bassler

Press Officer

U.S. EPA Region 5

[bassler.rachel@epa.gov](mailto:bassler.rachel@epa.gov)

p: 312-886-7159

c: 312-914-3393

-----Original Message-----

From: Sarah Reese [<mailto:Sarah.Reese@nwi.com>]

Sent: Monday, March 27, 2017 10:22 AM

To: Bassler, Rachel <[Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov](mailto:Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov)>

Subject: Fwd: Media questions -- East Chicago water

Hi Rachel,

I have one additional question to add to this list.

Emails from Miguel Del Toral and Andrea Porter on Oct. 25, 2016, say, the operator confirmed "the numbers on the MOR are orthophosphate." IDEM's Mary Hollingsworth provided an update in October that said the city was "increasing orthophosphate feed to 1 ppm leaving the plant. Their target residuals in the distribution system is now 0.75 to 1 ppm."

Q: can EPA clarify what this means? Are the numbers on the city's MORs total phosphate (total P) or orthophosphate (PO<sub>4</sub>)? Was East Chicago measuring the total amount of orthophosphate it was feeding?

Thanks,

Sarah

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Sarah Reese <[Sarah.Reese@nwi.com](mailto:Sarah.Reese@nwi.com)<<mailto:Sarah.Reese@nwi.com>>>

Date: March 27, 2017 at 7:14:12 AM CDT

To: "Bassler, Rachel" <[Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov](mailto:Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov)<<mailto:Bassler.Rachel@epa.gov>>>

Subject: Media questions -- East Chicago water

Hi Rachel,

I have a list of questions regarding correspondence regarding East Chicago drinking water that I recently obtained through a FOIA request with EPA. Do you think you can get me answers and/or provide a statement by Wednesday morning?

Emails show EPA officials in August 2016 were aware of a 2002 paper titled “Effect of Phosphate Inhibitors on Lead Release From Pipes,” written by Marc Edwards and Laurie McNeill, that concluded “Hexametaphosphate generally increased soluble lead release over a broad range of water qualities,” and further stated, “Utilities should consider these adverse effects whenever polyphosphate is used to prevent scaling or iron precipitation; in fact, polyphosphates cannot be recommended for lead corrosion control.” The emails, which were linked to an email from IDEM’s Mary Hollingsworth confirming East Chicago was using sodium hexametaphosphate. EPA’s Rita Bair emailed IDEM’s Mary Hollingsworth Aug. 18, saying, “We need to find out if East Chicago is adding some kind of orthophosphate for CCT beyond the polyphosphate addition.” Hollingsworth responded Aug. 19 by sending EPA an information sheet for a chemical called Carus 8600. It appears East Chicago started using Carus 8600 on Sept. 6, according to an email in the Virtual File Cabinet. A city engineering report says the city changed chemicals in September 2016 “under recent guidance from IDEM.”

Q: Did IDEM ask East Chicago to use the ortho-polyphosphate blend Carus 8600 at the urging of EPA?

Virginia Tech professor Marc Edwards said, “While the new chemical 8600 is better than sodium hexametaphosphate, I think they could do better with just orthophosphate.”

Q: Does EPA have a response to that statement?

Internal EPA emails in August 2016 also showed employees were aware of a 2005 American Water Works Association report titled “Managing Change and Unintended Consequences: Lead and Copper Rule Corrosion Control Treatment.” The report discusses several factors that may have been at play in East Chicago, including the change to membrane filtration, blending finished waters and changing corrosion control chemicals.

Q: What steps, if any, did EPA take to investigate whether any of the factors mentioned above might be affecting quality, including lead levels, in East Chicago’s water?

An email from IDEM's Mary Hollingsworth to EPA's Thomas Poy on Jan. 5, 2017, took issue with "misinformation" in a letter EPA's Robert Kaplan wrote to Sen. Donnelly (I believe this to be a letter written to Rep. Pete Visclosky based on content of the letter described by Hollingsworth). The first point Hollingsworth discusses is the 15 ppb action level. The letter explains the sampling required under the Lead and Copper Rule, and Hollingsworth goes on to say results above the action level in EPA's sequential sampling do not indicate an issue with East Chicago's compliance or IDEM's implementation and oversight, but might indicate an issue with the Lead and Copper Rule.

Q: Residents, environmental groups and experts agree that "any results over 15 ppb would be a major cause for concern." Does EPA agree with that statement?

Q: Does EPA have any updates on its previously stated intention to update the Lead and Copper Rule?

Q: Hollingsworth's Jan. 5 email says low orthophosphate levels found in the Superfund site are the result of low water flows because of dead-end lines near railroad tracks. It appears IDEM is taking a position that the low orthophosphate levels found in the Superfund site are a localized issue, not a systemwide issue as EPA has previously stated.

Q: Does EPA have any response to that?

IDEM has stated the mass relocation of people from the West Calumet Housing Complex also could result in lower orthophosphate residuals in the Superfund site.

Q: What steps, if any, has EPA taken to protect residents in the Superfund site from this possible exposure?

Hollingsworth's Jan. 5, 2017, email also says "IDEM has always felt that working closely with EPA on drinking water issues is extremely important and we will continue to work with EPA, but because of this situation and the way it was handled and is still being handled, our close working relationship had been compromised."

Q: Has EPA responded to this email?

Q: Isn't it important for residents to know -- regardless of whether the city is in compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule -- that they have elevated lead levels in their drinking water?

It appears EPA, IDEM and the city had been working on draft FAQs to hand out at an open house regarding lead in drinking water when Mayor Anthony Copeland suddenly upended that process by announcing water sampling results in an open letter.

Q: Were the parties initially planning to announce water testing results at a Dec 10 open house?

Thanks,

Sarah

Sarah Reese

Staff Writer

o. 219.933.3351 | c. 219.841.1034 | e. [sarah.reese@nwi.com](mailto:sarah.reese@nwi.com)<<mailto:sarah.reese@nwi.com>>

The Times Media Co. | 601 W 45th Avenue Munster, IN 46321 Visit us at  
NWI.COM<<http://www.nwitemtimes.com/>> for the most updated news and information 24/7/365  
Stay Connected: Facebook<<http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home>> |  
Twitter<<https://twitter.com/>> | RSS<<http://www.nwitemtimes.com/pages/rss/>> |  
Mobile<<http://www.nwitemtimes.com/mobile/>> | iPhone<<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/nwi-com/id369916938?mt=8>> | iPad<<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/the-northwest-indiana-times/id490731940?mt=8>>